## Understanding Violent Extremism: The Missing Link

*Tamara Kharroub*
*September 25, 2015*

The issue of violent extremism has been the center of media and policy attention in the United States especially since 9/11. Numerous research and analysis papers, as well as conferences and government projects, have been dedicated to understanding the drivers of violent extremism and providing recommendations for what is known as "CVE" or Countering Violent Extremism. While some maintain that counterterrorism efforts may have weakened Al-Qaida, new offshoots that are even more extreme and more brutal have surfaced with increasing worldwide support.

In particular, scholars and journalists alike have spent the past few years trying to understand the so-called "Islamic State" and have been puzzled by the broad resonance of such extremist groups and ideologies with young people. What could possibly drive someone to commit such horrific atrocities as rape, sexual slavery, beheadings, and other forms of brutal killings? What attracts men and women from Syria and neighboring countries, and even all the way from Kazakhstan, Russia, Europe, China,[1] and the United States[2] to the "Islamic State"? Academics and policy-makers have been trying to understand the drivers of violent extremism.

### Drivers of Violent Extremism: The Empirical Evidence

Analysts of the "Islamic State" have considered what are known as 'push' and 'pull' factors that lead individuals to join extremist groups. The primary individual-level 'push factors' have been identified to include socioeconomic status, education levels, personal grievances, alienation, victimization and existential threat, and anger at injustices and persecution. The main 'pull factors' that attract young men and women to extremist groups like the "Islamic State" involve the narrative of religious duty, utopia building and fulfilling prophecies of apocalyptic Islam, attaining reputation and acknowledgement, seeking a sense of belonging, and the promise of adventure and a romanticized lifestyle.

Much of the research and analysis of 'ISIS appeal' has focused on individual level and societal circumstances. Socio-economic conditions have long been thought to make individuals more vulnerable and more susceptible to being influenced by extremist groups. Although at face value, issues of economic disadvantage, low income, and lack of education might seem central in causing personal grievances and hopelessness and thus predicting the tendencies for violent extremism, the research literature provides little to no evidence for this relationship. Several cross-country studies found no support for the low-income hypothesis,[3] and research has shown that less educated individuals are not more likely to be drawn to violent extremism.[4] Women migrating from western democratic countries to ISIS-controlled territory and joining the "Islamic State" also tend to come from comfortable educated backgrounds.[5] Similarly, surveying young people in Somalia[6] and Afghanistan[7] shows no link between poverty, unemployment and political violence. In fact, the opposite might be true. Some studies have shown that extremist violent organizations tend to recruit smart well-educated members. It is also believed that violence and instability present higher risks for poor and less educated individuals whose primary focus is often on immediate and basic needs, therefore the poor have been found to hold less favorable views of militant groups than middle-income individuals[8] and are less likely to be politically active in general. Actually, evidence shows

that 'economic opportunity' is a better predictor of violent extremism than economic conditions, where educated individuals with no access to opportunities are more likely to be angry and frustrated at economic inequalities.[9] For example, Jordanians who joined ISIS and other groups in Syria were previously employed (some as doctors and engineers) and even self-financed their trips and smuggling fees into Syria.[10] Overall, the empirical literature concludes that socioeconomic conditions alone do not predict support for violent extremism and willingness to join extremist groups.

The issues of religiosity and Islamic scripture are often blamed for the ISIS phenomenon. However, there is no evidence for the relationship between religiosity and support for violent extremism or for the idea of militant Jihadism among Muslims. For example, studies in Pakistan show that religiosity does not predict support for militarized jihad,[11] and that support for 'religious militancy' is not a product of religious devotion but (much like any other social group phenomenon) lies largely in the organizational doctrine adopted by leaders and groups.[12] A comprehensive examination of violent extremism across religions and time periods concludes that religion is rarely the root cause or driver of conflicts; instead religion is most often introduced as a way to express grievances and later provides an added layer of justification for violent conduct.[13] Just as some Muslim extremists cite Islamic scripture to justify their use of violence, many other devout Muslims use scripture to justify peace, and some Christians and Jews cite their scripture to justify violence.[14] It is evident, thereby, that while any scripture can be used to justify violence, it does not necessarily determine the behavior of its followers.

Some have pointed to the lack of democracy as a driver for violent extremism, where young discontented individuals seeking to express their views and improve their conditions under repressive regimes have no outlet for political participation except violence. However, there is no empirical evidence supporting a direct link between the lack of democracy and extremist violence. Some even argue that the lack of freedoms can reduce the likelihood of violent extremism, as repression makes participation in extremist groups highly risky and very costly.[15] Research on this topic has shown that some aspects of democratic regimes that afford freedoms and political participation reduce personal grievances and consequently the likelihood of individuals to turn to violent extremism. Other studies have in fact shown the opposite, where democracies can provide spaces for violent extremist ideologies to grow through affording these groups the freedoms of speech, movement, and assembly.[16] Most notably, violent extremism is known to grow in the context of weak or recently democratized states.[17]

Other than socioeconomic conditions and the lack of democracy, many observers point to the role of injustices in driving violent extremism. Some propositions have explored issues of economic marginalization and social alienation as factors that lead to radicalization. There is sufficient evidence that economic inequality between groups as well as political and social injustices combined with a weak state facilitate an environment of violence.[18] Moreover, countries with higher human rights abuses and internally displaced populations,[19] exclusion of ethnic minorities from the political process,[20] and socioeconomic discrimination against minorities[21] have been found to experience higher rates of violent extremist attacks and radicalization. With this regard, we consistently hear discrimination, human rights abuses, and injustices used to explain and justify violent ideologies, including those by militarized Islamic groups who describe their group's experiences of marginalization in Arab and Muslim countries and the discrimination that Muslims face around the world.

As part of the injustice premise, narratives of victimization and existential threats play a significant role in the radicalization process. These narratives essentially fuel the victimized individuals' need to belong as well as to defend their threatened identities. For example, Jordanian fighters joining ISIS and other Islamist militant groups in Syria repeatedly cite the systematic rape of Sunni women by the Assad regime and the need to fight for 'social justice' as reasons for their decision to join these groups.[22] Syrians who join ISIS and other Islamist groups are motivated by their quest for regime change and reform, and primarily point to the success of the "Islamic State" as being more likely to achieve this change.[23] "Islamic State" leaders (e.g., Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi and his associates), who have been detained by US forces in Iraq at Camp Bucca, often use Maliki's marginalization of Sunnis in Iraq to recruit Sunni Iraqis to join the "Islamic Sate". In the same way, Muslim youth in Kenya join extremist groups in reaction to perceptions that they are under threat from government 'collective punishment' of Kenyan Somali nationals.[24] In their social media posts, western women who travelled to join the "Islamic State" reference their experiences of discrimination and abuse in the West for being Muslims, and regularly express their frustration with the persecution of Muslims worldwide that draws no western or international concern.[25]

As can be seen, the research evidence shows no direct link between socio-economic conditions and support for violent extremism. Similarly, religiosity, democracy, freedoms, etc. do not increase people's likelihood to join extremist groups. The most consistent findings in academic and field research show that injustice and discrimination against minority groups are the primary motivators. As is sometimes argued, politically motivated (non-state) violence is a tool of the weak in the face of strong adversaries.[26] However, political dissent and activism must not be conflated with violent extremism. Injustices and the above-mentioned *underlying conditions* alone do not lead individual to *endorse sexual slavery and celebrate the mass beheadings of innocent people.* This paper aims to investigate the missing link between injustices and political activism on one end, and violent extremism on the other.


**The State of CVE: Countering Violent Extremism**

Given the empirical evidence, there seems to be a dissonance between the drivers of violent extremism and the responsive CVE strategies. Since September 11, 2001, the US Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, and numerous international organizations have spent millions of dollars and vast efforts devising and revising programs to counter violent extremism. CVE efforts in the last decade or so have been as varied and diverse as the drivers of violent extremism. While some strategies address immediate violent threats, others focus on preventing recruitment through education and economic empowerment. For the purpose of understanding and assessing these strategies, I categorize them into five groups based on the different stages in the process that leads to violent extremism; conditions that might encourage radicalization, the recruitment process, ideological radicalization, joining extremist groups, and committing violent attacks.

First, CVE efforts have been primarily focused on improving the local conditions believed to radicalize individuals (such as poverty, instability, oppression), for example through empowering women and youth, vocational training and employment programs, political and economic development, stabilization efforts, supporting government reform, and policies to increase and foster economic and social inclusion.[27] Secondly, other strategies are designed to prevent recruitment by extremist groups through counter-messages, reform Islam messaging, social media monitoring, and arrests of suspects. The third element in Countering Violent Extremism involves an educational

approach to increase access to alternative religious knowledge, religious education and rehabilitation for detainees in prisons, and promoting alternative and moderate voices. Fourth, in order to prevent individuals from joining extremist groups such as traveling to the "Islamic State," US forces have joined global coalitions to prevent travel and border crossings (e.g., securing borders, intelligence efforts, information sharing on threats and suspects). The last set of CVE methods includes actual fighting of extremist groups through military means, strengthening security forces and the capabilities of local countries, capacity building, coalitions, disrupting economic resources and ISIS financing, and designing contextual solutions tailored to each region.[28]

While such measures are very important in building democratic inclusive civil societies and functioning economies, these CVE strategies do not address the problems of alienation, discrimination and oppression increasingly faced by many Muslims worldwide. With overwhelming evidence pointing to issues of group-based injustices, a social psychology approach is needed to explore the underlying group processes. In order to better understand these identity dynamics, the social psychology of inter-group conflict and polarization is considered hereby.

**The social psychology of inter-group conflict and identity dynamics**

When considering extremist violent groups and ideologies, it is evident that individuals choose to join them for a number of different reasons, including alienation, oppression, ideologies, or adventure. However, what drives a group to collectively promote and endorse as virtue the brutal and unjust persecution of others is far less understood and addressed. As the research on the drivers of violent extremism produces recurring correlations between violent extremism and identity-related factors such as group-based injustice, the missing link resides in intergroup identity dynamics.

For decades, social psychologists studying genocide have tried to understand the psychological processes that lead to mass killings and atrocities such as the Rwandan genocide and Nazi Germany. Earlier discussions that focused primarily on intra-psychic processes failed to explain the mass phenomena of prejudice and discrimination. Contemporary social psychological perspectives on violent extremism and genocide explain these phenomena by exploring group processes and the dehumanization of victims. Dehumanization occurs when an out-group is defined as unworthy of the moral considerations afforded to members of the in-group. As such, dehumanization is conceived of as a necessary precursor for committing brutal attacks against out-group members.[29] Such atrocious actions can be legitimized by perpetrators not only through ideological justifications (which are often not sufficient on their own) but also through a narrative of threat followed by a process of moral disengagement. The processes leading to dehumanization and violence develop gradually, and go through three major inter-group phenomena.

The first step is increased identification with the in-group identity. According to social identity theory, people categorize themselves and others as belonging to different social groups[30] (such as ethnicity and religion). Social categorization is a natural process that occurs due to the limited capacity of the human brain to process incoming information, thereby social categorization is used as a cognitive tool to simplify and structure the social environment. Whereas the degree of emotional significance of one social identity (membership in a given social group) varies, it has been proven that rejection leads to higher identification with that social group. Research shows evidence for the rejection-identification model (RIM), where discrimination (perceived or real) against one's in-group leads to higher identification and greater attachment with that particular victimized group (especially

as acceptance by the out-group becomes improbable).[31] This is further intensified by a desire for a positive distinctive in-group self-concept and a resulting exclusion of the out-group. Moreover, "in-group/out-group bias" occurs as positive attitudes and behaviors are assigned to the in-group and negative counterparts to the out-group.

In the context of the "Islamic State" and threats to US targets, anti-Muslim sentiments and discrimination only lead to greater alienation of Muslim citizens, higher identification with their Muslim identity and groups, and a resulting self-isolation. As we have seen, the most recurring and robust theme in the accounts of those who join extremist violent groups seems to be the idea of alienation, marginalization, group-based injustices, and persecution of in-group members. For example, western women who travel to join ISIS describe feeling isolated and being physically or verbally attacked in western societies especially for wearing *hijab* or *niqab*.[32] Foreign fighters who joined ISIS reference the need to belong and join communities that share similar values as themselves.[33] Although not all people who face discrimination turn to violent extremism, it is at this stage when individuals seek in-groups and belonging that the reputation and recruitment strategies of the "Islamic State" come into play. The success and power of this group, in combination with the alternative stable reality it offers through a state-building project, increased self-esteem, and the appeal of adventure and romance, might attract young Muslims who are disillusioned and marginalized in their home countries.

Following isolation and active pursuit of like-minded in-group communities, the second step comprises the radicalization process. Depending on what types of 'similar' communities they stumble upon (whether online of offline), these individuals start adopting the groups' views and norms. Several group processes can take place at this stage including conformity to group norms and compliance with the authority. Most importantly, a process of group polarization continues to occur within a group. Polarization refers to the tendency of the group's views to become more extreme as members of the group exchange their opinions. This phenomenon occurs as a result of two processes; persuasive argumentation and social comparison.[34] As several members of the group present arguments supporting the dominant view and by hearing an increasing number of supporting arguments, their views become more extreme. In addition, in an attempt to save their reputation within the group, members tend to adjust their positions to fit the dominant views in the group. When group members are only exposed to the group's extremist views (as a result of isolation), they quickly become more radicalized and brutal. Research of individuals who joined the "Islamic State" shows that they reinforce one another's extremist views and become more radical over time.[35] Evidence of individuals joining the "Islamic State" also confirms that they most likely radicalize in small groups as they are more readily influenced by close friends[36] and family members.[37] Therefore, counter-messaging, especially from US supported figures that are not considered credible, is not likely to deter the process of radicalization.

The third inter-group process that facilitates violent extremism is the view of evil as virtue, where violent extremists really believe that their actions are righteous. This occurs when the out-group is perceived as a threat to the in-group,[38] whether a threat to the in-group's existence, job security, values, or way of life. Once the out-group has been established as a threat, it is automatically dehumanized and its destruction becomes a virtuous act of self-defense. There is a widely shared perception by Muslims that the West continues to alienate them and support attacks on Muslims around the world such as the occupation of Palestine, discrimination against Muslims in the United States and Europe, and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. A study of 14 Muslim countries found that a perceived threat to Islam is the strongest predictor of support for violent extremism.[39] With

regard to the "Islamic State" in particular, narratives of collective victimization of Muslims worldwide and of Sunni Muslims in the Middle East have been cited in numerous studies as push and pull factors that drive individuals to join ISIS.[40]

## Recommendations

Although these group-based injustices are often referenced as the drivers motivating individuals to "fight back,' most officials and analysts advising CVE programs in the US maintain that the solutions involve political, social, and economic changes that are outside the control of the United States.[41] This disproportionate focus on internal factors in a clinical-style diagnosis of violent extremism as if it occurs in a vacuum is misleading, at best. Both the evidence and the social psychology theories confirm that radicalization and violent extremism are gradual processes that develop primarily through inter-group identity dynamics as a result of perceived threats to the in-group.

While CVE directors are busy training Imams and establishing vocational training and employment programs, 14-year-old Muslim student Ahmad Mohamed was arrested and interrogated on 14 September 2015 in Irving, Texas for building a homemade clock (wrongly thought to be a bomb). A comment on Facebook reads, "If one day he makes a bomb it will be because of this day." Canadian female migrant to ISIS territory, with Twitter name Um Ibrahim, posted, "You modern Muslims can sympathize with the Kuffar all you want but in the end they will blame you and label you a terrorist, just like us…"[42]

Such incidents of discrimination and attacks on Muslims that continue to take place are sure to undermine CVE efforts. The power of the emotional responses and the anger that such hostilities trigger among Muslims worldwide cannot be underestimated. Given all of the above, in order to counter Islamic violent extremism the United States must play a more pro-active role in reversing the current perception of discrimination and attacks against Muslims. Although such measures are not as tangible as employment or military programs, they must be incorporated into any attempt to understand and respond to the globally growing phenomenon of violent extremism.

As such, it is imperative that the US implements a systematic strategy to prevent and discourage racist rhetoric and attacks against Muslims whether in the US or around the world and counter-balance the biased negative media portrayals of Muslims. At the same time, the misunderstanding and misinformation about Islam and the dominant discourse in the US conflating Islam with terrorism and violence (e.g., most recently in GOP presidential debates and campaigns), will certainly invoke unfavorable reactions from Muslims. The terminology in labeling violent extremism as Islamic is likely perceived as an attack on Islam and will only exacerbate the problem by intensifying inter-group conflict. There must be public acknowledgements that violent extremism is not an Islamic phenomenon, and that the persecution of groups by other groups backed by ideological justification (religious or otherwise) has been going on throughout history (e.g., white supremacists, Nazism, slavery, neo-Nazis, Jewish extremists, and right-wing attacks in the West[43]). In order to show a commitment to genuine dialogue and positive relations with and attitudes towards Muslims, the United States needs to adopt a serious multifaceted and sustained long-term strategy to engage with the Muslim world that goes beyond "counterterrorism" and political and economic alliances.

Of particular significance to U. interests is the issue of Palestine. It is no secret that Osama Bin Laden revealed that Palestine prompted 9/11, and that the Palestinian cause "fueled [his] desire to stand by

the oppressed."[44] While US politicians rush to pander to the radical pro-Israel lobby, ignoring the suffering of the Palestinian people will continue to produce resentment and hostility against the United States among the world's Muslims. Although the "Islamic State" has not showed as much commitment to the Palestinian cause, there is no doubt that part of the frustration and alienation felt by Muslims around the world stems from the united States' political, financial, and military support of Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine and its daily violations of Palestinians' human rights and international law. The "Islamic State" and other groups waste no chance to use the Palestinian cause in their recruitment of Muslims around the world. Therefore, one of the major recommendations is for the US to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people and work towards a more objective and just approach. Adopting a more credible position regarding Palestine will significantly contribute to diffusing the resentment towards the US among the world's Muslims.

The United States and western powers have been waging wars in the Middle East for more than a decade and employing double standards in dealing with the region, from the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, military action in Libya, the failure to address the Israeli-Palestinian issue, to using Syria as the battleground between world powers for strategic influence in the region. As a result, millions have been displaced, thousands have been killed, and Arabs and Muslims around the world are watching in anger and despair. The US must address the consequences of its policies in the Middle East, and adopt a new and engaging strategy. Any CVE efforts addressing only the symptoms while overlooking the root causes will leave the United States chasing a ghost of the "Islamic state" that will continue to multiply and evolve in new and different forms.

[1]  Zavadski, Katie. "The United States of ISIS: More Popular Than Al Qaeda Ever Was." *The daily Beast*, September 11, 2015. http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/09/11/the-united-states-of-isis.html
[2]  Gurcan, Metin. "How the Islamic State is exploiting Asian unrest to recruit fighters." *Al-Monitor*, September 9, 2015. http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/09/turkey-china-xinjiang-uighurs-isis-prevent-extremism.html
[3]  Blair, Graeme, C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro. "Poverty and support for militant politics: Evidence from Pakistan." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 1 (2013): 30-48.
[4]  Krueger, Alan B., and Jitka Malečková. "Education, poverty and terrorism: Is there a causal connection?." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 4 (2003): 119-144.
[5]  Saltman, E. M., and Melanie Smith. "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part' Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon." *Institute for Strategic Dialogue/International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence* (2015). http://www.strategicdialogue.org/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf
[6]  "Examining the Links between Youth Economic Opportunities, Civic Engagement and Conflict: Evidence from Mercy Corps' Somali Youth Leaders Initiative." *Mercy Corps* (2013). http://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/somaliabrief_2_13_13.pdf
[7]  "Does Youth Employment Build Stability? Evidence from an Impact Evaluation of Vocational Training in Helmand, Afghanistan." *Mercy Corps* (2014). http://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/does-youth-employment-build-stability
[8]  Blair et al. "Poverty and support for militant politics."
[9]  Basuchoudhary, Atin, and William F. Shughart. "On ethnic conflict and the origins of transnational terrorism." *Defence and Peace Economics* 21, no. 1 (2010): 65-87.
[10]  Proctor, Keith. "Looking for more than a job: The tenuous link between poverty and extremism." Research by *Mercy Corps* presented at conference *The Economics-Countering Violent Extremism Nexus: Drivers and Solutions*, Aspen Institute, Washington DC, September 8, 2015.
[11]  Fair, Christine C., Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro. "Islam, militancy, and politics in Pakistan: Insights from a national sample." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 4 (2010): 495-521.
[12]  Fair, Christin C., Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro. *The roots of militancy: Explaining support for political violence in Pakistan*. Working Paper, Princeton University, 2009.
[13]  Juergensmeyer, Mark. *Global rebellion: Religious challenges to the secular state, from Christian militias to al Qaeda*. Vol. 16. Univ of California Press, 2008.
[14]  McCants, Will. "Islamic scripture is not the problem. And funding Muslim reformers is not the solution." *Brookings Middle East Politics & Policy*, June 17, 2015. http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/06/16-islamic-scripture-not-problem-mccants
[15]  Piazza, James A. "Repression and Terrorism: A Cross-National Empirical Analysis of Types of Repression and Domestic Terrorism." *Terrorism and Political Violence* ahead-of-print (2015): 1-17.
[16]  Li, Quan. "Does democracy promote or reduce transnational terrorist incidents?." *Journal of Conflict resolution* 49, no. 2 (2005): 278-297.
[17]  Eyerman, Joe. "Terrorism and democratic states: Soft targets or accessible systems." *International Interactions* 24, no. 2 (1998): 151-170.
[18]  Proctor, Keith. "Youth & Consequences: Unemployment, Injustice and Violence." *Mercy Corps*, 2015. http://www.mercycorps.org/research-resources/youth-consequences-unemployment-injustice-and-violence
[19]  Choi, Seung-Whan, and James A. Piazza. "Internally Displaced Populations and Suicide Terrorism." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2014): 0022002714550086.
[20]  Choi, Seung-Whan, and James A. Piazza. "Ethnic groups, political exclusion and domestic terrorism." *Defence and Peace Economics* (2014): 1-27. doi:10.1080/10242694.2014.987579
[21]  Piazza, James A. "Types of minority discrimination and terrorism." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 29, no. 5 (2012): 521-546.
[22]  Proctor. "Looking for more than a job."
[23]  Mironova, Vera, Loubna Mrie, and Sam Whitt. "The Motivations of Syrian Islamist Fighters." *Combatting Terrorism Center* (2014). https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-motivations-of-syrian-islamist-fighters
[24]  Botha, Anneli. "Radicalisation in Kenya Recruitment to al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council." *Institute for Security Studies*, (2014). https://www.africaportal.org/dspace/articles/radicalisation-kenya-recruitment-al-shabaab-and-mombasa-republican-council
[25]  Saltman and Smith. "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part'."
[26]  Piazza, James A. "Characteristics of Terrorism Hotspots." *Global ECCO*. https://globalecco.org/characteristics-of-terrorism-hotspots
[27]  "Preventing Violent Extremism with Development Interventions: A Strategic Review." *World Bank*, (2015).
[28]  "The White House Summit to Counter Violent Extremism Ministerial Meeting February 19, 2015." Draft Follow-On Action Agenda, *Global Center*, April 2015. http://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Draft-Follow-On-Action-Agenda-3-April-2015-version.pdf
[29]  Savage, Rowan. "Modern genocidal dehumanization: a new model." *Patterns of Prejudice* 47, no. 2 (2013): 139-161.
[30]  Tajfel, Henri. "Individuals and groups in social psychology*." *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 18, no. 2 (1979): 183-190.
[31]  Branscombe, Nyla R., Michael T. Schmitt, and Richard D. Harvey. "Perceiving pervasive discrimination among African Americans: Implications for group identification and well-

being." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 77, no. 1 (1999): 135-149.

32 Saltman and Smith. "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part'."
33 Mironova, Vera, and Sam Whitt. "A Glimpse into the Minds of Four Foreign Fighters in Syria." *Combating Terrorism Center*, June 30, 2014. https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/a-glimpse-into-the-minds-of-four-foreign-fighters-in-syria
34 Isenberg, Daniel J. "Group polarization: a critical review and meta-analysis." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 50, no. 6 (1986): 1141.
35 Mironova et al. "The Motivations of Syrian Islamist Fighters."
36 Saltman and Smith. "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part'."
37 Proctor. "Looking for more than a job."
38 Reicher, Stephen, S. Alexander Haslam, and Rakshi Rath. "Making a virtue of evil: a five-step social identity model of the development of collective hate." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2, no. 3 (2008): 1313-1344.
39 Fair, C. Christine, and Bryan Shepherd. "Who supports terrorism? Evidence from fourteen Muslim countries." *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006): 51-74.
40 Saltman and Smith. "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part'."
41 Kaidanow, Tina. Ambassador-at-Large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism US Department of State. "Al-Qaida, the Islamic State, and the future of the global jihadi movement." Presented at Brookings Institute event, Washington DC, September16, 2015.
42 Saltman and Smith. "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part'."
43 Briggs, Rachel, and Matthew Goodwin. "We need a better understanding of what drives right-wing extremist violence." http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48364/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-We_need_a_better_understanding_of_what_drives_rightwing_extremist_violence.pdf
44 "Bin Laden: Palestine Cause Prompted 9/11." *CBS NEWS*, May 16, 2008. http://www.cbsnews.com/news/bin-laden-palestinian-cause-prompted-9-11/